

sanctioned any reformation at all. It is only in an infallible Church that progress by reform is impossible, and infallibility is a dogma of Rome, not of Canterbury. In a Church that had changed its creed and its rites more than once there was no necessary finality, in spite of Acts of Supremacy and Conformity, unless the Romanist dogma of the infallibility of law and tradition was admitted.

Unhappily, these Puritans, in their dogmatic insistence on their own tenets, could not cast a stone at their opponents on this ground. From this point of view there is little to choose between a Whitgift and a Cartwright. Whitgift stemmed the tide of reform because he had the power; Cartwright would have stemmed it if he had had the power. These stiff-necked Puritans were troublesome to constituted authority, and inclined at times to be captious and superior to their neighbours. They in turn were eager to impart to Christianity an element of legality which savours of Phariseeism. Neither side viewed external forms in small things with indifference. If Whitgift stickled for certain postures, Cartwright was equally tyrannic on questions of individual liberty in practice. It is not because we sympathise with their intellectual or religious standpoint that we sympathise with their resistance to a harsh autocracy. It is because to a certain extent they championed the independence of mind and conscience from the trammels of tradition, and because their championship was destined to bear great fruit in the near future. Their courage in refusing to comply with the fiat of legalised authority in matters of mind and conscience is admirable. They protested in their own unenlightened fashion against the despotic exercise of such authority, and such a protest must count for much in the age of the imperious Elizabeth. It was to achieve much in the age that followed, and therefore it is of exceeding consequence for us to grasp clearly the origin and trend of this early Puritan movement.

While Elizabeth as a ruler was quick to gauge the forces that made the England of her time, she was strangely blind, despite her vaunted sagacity, to those that were already shaping the new age that her death inaugurated. She failed completely to understand the force of religious principle and passion as embodied in these Puritans. With all her masculine